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AUTHOR McGhee, Marcheta; Satcher, Jamie
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of rehabilitation counselors working in public (state/federal) rehabilitation agencies in the United States. Participants were 2,217 rehabilitation counselor survey respondents from 29 states whose agencies agreed to take part in the study. A total of 4,199 surveys were mailed. Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. The three components of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) were examined using the Organizational Commitment Scales. Potential predictor variables examined were: (1) years of service; (2) age; (3) education level; (4) Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) status; (5) conscientiousness; (6) initiative; (7) cooperation; and (8) attendance/punctuality. Results indicate that work behaviors are important predictors of overall job satisfaction, emotional, and normative attachment of counselors toward the agencies for which they work. Because both job satisfaction and emotional attachment have been linked to higher levels of productivity, public rehabilitation agencies are encouraged to develop ways of rewarding those counselor behaviors (conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation) which are most predictive of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment. Contains two appendices: (1) job satisfaction items and (2) organizational commitment items. (JBJ)

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PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STATE AGENCY REHABILITATION COUNSELORS: NATIONAL RESULTS

by

Marcheta McGhee, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Auburn University at Montgomery

and

Jamie Satcher, Ph.D., CRC, Associate Professor

The University of Alabama

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PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STATE AGENCY REHABILITATION COUNSELORS: NATIONAL RESULTS

This study examined the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of rehabilitation counselors working in public (state/federal) rehabilitation agencies in the United States. Participants were from the 29 states whose agencies agreed to take part in the study.

Demographic Information

Two-thousand two-hundred and seventeen (2,217) out of 4,199 surveys were returned. The following demographic questions were asked:

1. How long had the counselors worked with their state agencies?
2. How old were the counselors?
3. Did the counselors have masters or bachelor's degrees?
4. Were the counselors Certified Rehabilitation Counselors?

The counselors ranged in years worked as a counselor in their state agencies from 1 month to 36 years, with a mean of 10.10 years. They ranged in age from 21 to 72 years with a mean age of 43.48. One thousand two-hundred and seventy-two (1,272) of the counselors had master's degrees or higher while 914 reported having bachelor's degrees. Twenty eight (28) counselors did not respond to this item. Four hundred and ninety-five (495) counselors indicated that they were Certified Rehabilitation Counselors while 1,672 said they were not. Fifty counselors did not report their certification status.

I. JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist (1967, cited in Cook et al. (1982) described the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire as a sound measure of overall job satisfaction. The questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale with the following values:

1 = Very dissatisfied
2 = Dissatisfied
3 = I cannot decide whether I am satisfied or not
4 = Satisfied
5 = Very satisfied

A copy of the items can be found in Appendix A. Upon the completion of data collection, two items were deleted from the instrument: (a) being able to do things that do not go against my decisions, and (b) the chance to tell people what to do. Item a was deleted because the majority of respondents felt it was too ambiguously worded. Item b was deleted because the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that their jobs did not provide opportunities for supervision and that, when working with clients, it was not part of their responsibilities/philosophy to "tell others what to do." With the deletion of these items, possible scores could range from 18-90. Using Cronbach's Alpha, a new reliability coefficient was calculated. Reliability was found to be .87.

The range of scores from usable job satisfaction surveys (n = 2,115) were from 24-90, with a mean of 66.86 and a standard deviation of 10.90.

Data Analysis

The following question guided analysis of the data:

Can the job satisfaction of public rehabilitation counselors be predicted by any of the following variables: (a) years of service, (b) age, (c) education level, (d) CRC status, (e) conscientiousness, (f) initiative, (g) cooperation, and (h) attendance/punctuality.

Work behaviors included in the analysis were determined in the following manner. The participants were given a list of 15 work behaviors and were asked to respond to each work behavior using a Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree." The responses were then subjected to a factor analysis with a varimax rotation to identify work behavior groupings. Only those behaviors with a factor loading of .60 or higher were included in each group. Work behavior grouping were as follows:

Conscientiousness

I pay attention to details at work
I do my work thoroughly and completely
I have a concern for quality

Initiative

I am willing to volunteer for tasks
I give personal time to the agency
I show enthusiasm about my work
I am willing to take on extra responsibility

Cooperation

I share knowledge and information with others
I offer work suggestions to others

Attendance/Punctuality

I am late for work
I am absent from work

Correlations among the independent variables of the study can be found in Table 1. The examination of correlations among the independent variables of a study in which predictions will be made is important to rule out multicollinearity. Multicollinearity exists when two variables are so highly correlated that it would be difficult to determine which variable is actually predictive. One correlation of substantial magnitude was found: As age increased, years employed increased. When interpreting the following analyses, the reader is cautioned that, in those situations

Table 1.

Correlations: Independent Variables

	Age	CRC	Educat	Conscie	Initiative	Coopera	Att/Pun	Years
Age	1.00	.05*	.13**	-.01	-.04*	.02	-.04*	.58**
CRC	.05*	1.00	.25**	.00	.02	.00	.00	.13**
Education	.13**	.25**	1.00	- .02	.00	- .01	-.01	.15**
Conscientious	-.01	.00	-.02	1.00	.00	.00	.00	-.07**
Initiative	-.04*	.02	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	-.09**
Cooperation	.02	.00	-.01	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.07**
Att/Punctuality	-.04*	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00
Years	.58**	.13**	.15**	-.07**	-.09**	.07**	.00	1.00

*p < .05; **p < .01

where either age or years employed are significant, it may not be possible to determine whether age or years contribute the most to explaining the variance.

The research question was answered through stepwise multiple regression analysis. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 2. The most significant positive predictor of job satisfaction was conscientiousness. This was followed, in descending order, by initiative, and cooperation. Significant negative predictors of job satisfaction were education, attendance/punctuality, and years employed as a counselor with the agency. As a group, these variables accounted for 20% of the variance associated with job satisfaction.

As conscientiousness increased, so did job satisfaction. The same was found with initiative and cooperation. Counselors with bachelor's degrees tended to have greater job satisfaction than those with master's degrees or higher. The more counselors disagreed that they were absent/tardy, the higher were their levels of job satisfaction. As years employed as a counselor with the state agency increased, job satisfaction decreased.

Table 2.

Predictors of Job Satisfaction

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Conscientiousness	4.15	.223	.374	18.54	.00**
Initiative	1.86	.218	.172	8.52	.00**
Cooperation	1.12	.220	.103	5.10	.00**
Att/Punctuality	-.76	.220	-.07	-3.48	.00**
Years	-.07	.026	-.05	-2.58	.01*
Education	-1.87	.450	-.084	-4.16	.00**

*p < .05; **p < .01

II. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment refers to the dedication that employees feel toward the organization for which they work. It has been defined as "the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974, p. 604). It also has been related to the energy that employees expend on behalf of the organizations for which they work.

Meyer & Allen (1991) conceptualized organizational commitment as having three components: (a) affective, (b) normative, and (c) continuance. Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment that an individual has for the organization in which he or she works. Normative commitment refers to the individual's attachment to an organization because of values relating to loyalty. Continuance commitment refers, primarily, to an individual's attachment to the organization for which he or she works because the costs of leaving the organization would be too high. Workers operating from an affective model of commitment expend energy on behalf of the

organization because they *want* to. Workers operating from a normative model of commitment expend energy on behalf of the organization because the believe they *should*. Persons in the continuance model expend energy on behalf of their organizations because they feel they *have* to.

Affective, normative, and continuance commitment can occur simultaneously, although they are individual constructs (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). The effects of each component on job performance, however, may differ. Meyer et al. (1989) stated that, when the primary commitment to an organization is affective, the organization may benefit in terms of "superior" performance. Normative commitment may also be positively reflected in work performance. When the primary commitment is continuance, relatively poor performance may be evident.

This study examined the affective, normative, and continuance commitment of rehabilitation counselors using the Organizational Commitment Scales developed by Allen and Meyer (1989). Items can be found in Appendix B. Previous research using these scales has shown relative independence among the three components of organizational commitment, although a relationship may exist between affective and normative commitment. In the current study, the following correlations were found:

	Affective	Normative	Continuance
Affective	1.00	.50**	.05
Normative	.50**	1.00	.06
Continuance	.05	.06	1.00

**p< .01

A significant relationship was found between affective and normative commitment. The magnitude of this relationship, however, is not sufficient to conclude that they are measuring the same construct.

Previous researchers using these scales have found reliability coefficients ranging from .74 to .89 (Affective), .69 to .84 (Continuance), and .69 to .79 (Normative). In the current study, the following reliability coefficients were found: Affective (.66); Continuance (.75); Normative (.70).

The following questions guided the research:

1. **What are the affective, normative, and continuance commitment levels of state agency rehabilitation counselors toward the agencies in which they work?**

2. **Can state agency rehabilitation counselors' affective,normative, and continuation commitment be predicted using the following variables: (a) age, (b) years working as a counselor with the agency, (c) CRC status, (d) education, (e) conscientiousness, (f) initiative, (g) cooperation, and (h) attendance/punctuality?**

Question 1

For each area of commitment, scores on this instrument can range from 8-56. From 2,074 usable responses, the following scores were obtained:

Affective Commitment	Mean = 33.94	SD = 7.57	n = 2174
Normative Commitment	Mean = 31.09	SD = 7.53	n = 2130
Continuance Commitment	Mean = 37.71	SD = 8.83	n = 2157

As a group, the state agency counselors' primary level of commitment was continuance (have to). These were followed, respectively, by affective and normative commitment.

Question 2

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to investigate demographic and behavioral correlates of affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Demographic variables were age, CRC status, education, and years employed as a counselor with the state agency. Behavioral variables were conscientiousness, initiative, cooperation, and attendance/punctuality. Table 3 presents the results of the analysis for affective commitment.

Table 3.

Multiple Regression: Affective Commitment

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Age	.054	.021	.062	2.60	.01*
Education	-1.34	.303	-.087	-4.44	.00**
Conscientiousness	3.55	.150	.461	23.63	.00**
Initiative	.505	.148	.066	3.40	.00**
Cooperation	.616	.147	.081	4.17	.00**
Att/Punctuality	-.604	.148	-.079	-4.07	.00**
Years	.055	.022	.060	2.49	.01*

*p <.05; **p < .01

All variables except certification status were predictors of affective commitment. As a set, the variables accounted for 24% of the variance associated with affective commitment. A summary of results follows:

1. Conscientiousness was most predictive of affective commitment. The more counselors reported having concern for quality, doing their work thoroughly and completely, and paying attention to details at work, the greater was their level of emotional attachment to the organization.

2. Education level was a negative predictor. As counselors' education levels increased, their affective commitment decreased.

3. Initiative was a positive predictor of affective commitment. The more counselors reported willingness to volunteer for tasks, show enthusiasm about their work, and take on extra responsibility, the higher their level of emotional attachment to the organization.

4. Cooperation was a positive predictor of affective commitment. Counselors who were willing to share knowledge and information and offer work suggestions to others were more emotionally attached to their organizations.

5. Attendance/Punctuality was a negative predictor of affective commitment. Counselors who agreed that they were absent or tardy from work showed lower levels of affective commitment.

6. Age was a positive predictor of affective commitment. As counselors' ages increased, so did their emotional attachment to the organization.

7. Years of service as a counselor with the agency was a positive predictor of affective commitment. As counselors' years of service increased, so did their emotional attachment to the agency.

Table 4 illustrates multiple regression analysis for normative commitment.

The set of variables included in the final equation were education, conscientiousness, initiative, attendance/punctuality, and years of service as a counselor with the agency. As a set, the variables accounted for 10% of the variance associated with normative commitment. A summary of results follows:

1. Conscientiousness was most predictive of normative commitment. As levels of conscientiousness increased, so did normative commitment.

2. Initiative was a positive predictor of normative commitment. As initiative increased, so did normative commitment.

3. Attendance/punctuality were negative predictors of normative commitment. Counselors who agreed that they were absent or tardy showed lower levels of normative commitment.

4. Years as a counselor with the agency was a positive predictor of normative commitment. The more years with the agency, the higher the level of normative commitment.

5. Education level was a negative predictor of normative commitment. Counselors having bachelor's degrees tended toward higher levels of normative commitment than did those having master's degrees or higher.

Table 4.

Multiple Regression: Normative Commitment

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Education	-.996	.330	-.065	-3.01	.00**
Conscientiousness	2.13	.163	.282	13.18	.00**
Initiative	.634	.161	.084	3.93	.00**
Att/Punctuality	-.836	.162	-.109	5.13	.00**
Years	.050	.019	.055	2.55	.01*

*p < .05; **p < .01

Table 5 shows the results of multiple regression analysis for continuance commitment.

Table 5.

Multiple Regression: Continuance Commitment

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Conscientiousness	-.766	.198	-.086	3.86	.00**
Years	.061	.024	.057	2.58	.01*

*p < .05; **p < .01

Conscientiousness and years as a counselor were significant predictors of continuance commitment. These two variable, however, accounted for only 1% of the variance associated with this type of commitment. Significant findings were as follows:

1. Conscientiousness was a negative predictor of continuance commitment. The more counselors expended energy on behalf of the agency because they felt they *had to*, the less they reported being conscientious workers.

2. Years working as a counselor with the agency was a positive predictor of continuance commitment. The longer counselors worked with the agency, the more they expended energy on behalf of the agency because the costs of leaving were seen as too high.

DISCUSSION

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment among public-rehabilitation counselors may ultimately be reflected in the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities. Public (state/federal) agencies employing rehabilitation counselors should pay attention to those variables which are predictive of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Work behaviors appear to be most important to rehabilitation counselors' job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment. Public rehabilitation agencies wishing to enhance the job satisfaction and, in particular, affective commitment of its counselors are advised to consider ways to reward those behaviors which reflect conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation. Offering rewards (e.g., in the form of positive verbal reinforcement or letters to the counselor from administrators) for correct and complete case documentation, attention to details, and evidence of quality case services might serve to enhance satisfaction and emotional commitment. While these behaviors will typically lead to successful case closures, attention focused exclusively on <u>outcome</u> (i.e, # of 26 closures) rather than <u>process</u> may leave counselors feeling disempowered and unappreciated and may, ultimately, result in decreased work performance.

As a case in point, continuance commitment has been linked with relatively poor performance. In this study, conscientiousness was negatively correlated with continuance commitment. Those counselors reporting higher levels of *have to* commitment also reported lower levels of conscientiousness. This may also be reflected in attendance and punctuality. Counselors agreeing that they were absent or tardy showed lower levels of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment.

The overall patterns of commitment in this study create some concern. As a group, the counselors operated primarily from the continuance component of commitment. While it is important for agencies to provide incentives through work benefits (i.e., insurance, retirement, etc.), counselors operating primarily from a continuance model may have less productivity than those operating primarily from an affective or normative perspective. Again, public rehabilitation agencies need to emphasize (and reward) those behaviors that positively relate to affective and normative commitment.

Education level was a negative predictor of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment, Counselors with masters degrees or higher had lower levels of job satisfaction and both components of commitment. Any interpretation of this result would be speculation only. Further study is needed to identify possible reasons why counselors with more education appear less satisfied and committed than do their peers having bachelors degrees.

Counselors of increasing age and years of service had higher levels of affective, normative, and continuance commitment than younger counselors with fewer years of experience. It appears logical to conclude that counselors working for an agency because they want to would continue working for that agency. Further, older counselors' normative commitment may reflect traditional views of employee loyalty. Increased continuance commitment possibly reflects the costs associated with leaving an agency as one builds retirement equity, etc. This pattern does not seem problematic.

SUMMARY

The results of this study of the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of public agency rehabilitation counselors indicate that work behaviors are important predictors of the overall job satisfaction, emotional, and normative attachment of counselors toward the agencies for which they work. Because both job satisfaction and emotional attachment have been linked to higher levels of productivity, public rehabilitation agencies are encouraged to develop ways of rewarding those

counselor behaviors (conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation) which are most predictive of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment.

APPENDIX A

JOB SATISFACTION ITEMS

On my present job, this is how I feel about:

1. Being able to keep busy all the time
2. The chance to work alone on the job
3. The chance to do different things from time to time
4. The chance to be "somebody" in the community
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions
7. Being able to do things that do not go against my decisions*
8. The way my job provides for steady employment
9. the chance to do things for other people
10. The chance to tell people what to do*
11. The way company policies are put into practice
12. My pay and the amount of work I do
13. The chances for advancement on the job
14. The freedom to use my own judgement
15. The working conditions
16. The way my co-workers get along with each other
17. The praise I get for doing a good job
18. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job

*Deleted from final analysis

APPENDIX B

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ITEMS

Affective Commitment

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this agency

I enjoy discussing my agency with people outside of it

I really feel as if this agency's problems are my own

I think I could easily become as attached to another agency as I am to this one (Reversed)

I do not feel like "part of the family" at my agency (Reversed)

I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this agency (Reversed)

This agency has a great deal of personal meaning for me

I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my agency (Reversed)

Normative Commitment

I think that people these days move from company to company too often

I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization (Reversed)

Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me (Reversed)

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this agency is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain

If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my agency

I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization

Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers

I do not think that wanting to be a "company man" or "company woman" is sensible anymore (Reversed)

Continuance Commitment

I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one line up (Reversed)

It would be very hard for me to leave my agency right now, even if I wanted to

Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my agency right now

It would not be too costly for me to leave my agency in the near future (Reversed)

Right now, staying with my agency is a matter of necessity as much as desire

Right now, staying with my agency is a matter of necessity as much as desire

I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving my agency

One of the few negative consequences of leaving this agency would be the scarcity of available alternatives

One of the major reasons why I continue to work for this agency is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice-another organization may not match the overall benefits here

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